

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



118.344  
Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

LIBRARY OF THE  
OFFICE OF EXPERIMENT STATIONS

Extension Service Circular 344

JAN 3 1941

October 1940

EXPERIMENT STATION FILE

BETTER LIVING THROUGH SELF-HELP

A Summary of Home Demonstration Work in the United States, 1939

By

Grace E. Frysinger  
Senior Home Economist

Contents

	Page
Over a million rural women in organized groups.....	4
Good health for rural families.....	4
Food for health.....	5
Better rural housing.....	8
Comfortable and convenient homes.....	9
Cotton mattress making.....	11
Making the home attractive.....	12
Home grounds improvement.....	14
Better clothing at low cost.....	14
Managing the family income brings satisfaction.....	17
Crafts and markets provide cash income.....	18
Home demonstration markets.....	19
Getting along with others.....	20
Home-made good times for rural people.....	21
Recreation.....	22
Nearly 237,000 rural women are volunteer leaders.....	23
Special events.....	23
Urban homemakers carry on.....	24
Work with Negro families.....	25
Summary.....	25

DISTRIBUTION: A copy of this circular has been sent to each extension director; State leader, assistant State leader, and county agent in home demonstration work; home-economics specialist; extension editor; agricultural-college library; and experiment-station library.

Oregon. - The years have brought about a great change and improvement in the rural people of the State who have become more articulate because of their own accomplishments in home demonstration work. They have widened their circle of friends and neighbors; their interests are no longer limited to their homes and communities; they have a greater interest in State and national affairs. The rural families have greatly improved their appearances. Better dress, better posture, better health, have resulted in more poise and pride, which have a decided effect on the abilities and feelings of the individual.

Azalea Sager, State Home Demonstration Leader.

Texas. - With the increasing social-mindedness of agricultural leaders there are increasing opportunities for rural women to make a characteristic and worthwhile contribution to local and national agricultural planning. They will help.....to emphasize more abundant living for the farm family and to convince the men with whom they work that while the economic considerations are fundamental, there are many other factors in successful living.

Mildred Horton, Vice director of extension and State home demonstration agent.

Minnesota. - Above every other general aim is that of developing people - to help them read more, study more, think more, and be able to live more completely with their families and in their communities; to help them better to reevaluate conditions, personalities, and forces, to recognize values, and to continue to develop better standards, recognizing their duty to themselves and their responsibilities to others.

Julia O. Newton, State home demonstration leader.

Vermont. - The factors which affect this work are not any different this year than in other years. We still are concerned with the best way of: (1) Finding community and county problems and making the local people aware of them; (2) planning methods of attacking these problems with the specialists, agents, and the local people; and (3) training agents and local women to carry out the program as it has been planned.

We recognize as in former years the mental barriers of indifference, ignorance, and irresponsibility; the physical barriers of isolation and lack of transportation; the social and economic barriers of class, money, and family. These we are attempting to break down as rapidly as possible.

Marjorie E. Luce, State home demonstration leader.

## BETTER LIVING THROUGH SELF-HELP

### A Summary of Home Demonstration Work in the United States, 1939

Good health, comfortable surroundings, wholesome food, adequate clothing, freedom from economic distress, and some degree of social satisfaction are normal desires of every individual.

During 1939, over 2 million rural homemakers of the United States made progress in attaining goals of better living. Over 236,000 rural women served as unpaid, capable, rural leaders who rendered service in many fields.

These 2 million homemakers reported improved housing, better physical health, and that they were better clothed without additional cost and carried on necessary tasks with greater ease and satisfaction. They earned cash income through such means as home industries and farm women's markets, and used available cash more efficiently when making needed purchases for family living. They added to the comfort and attractiveness of their homes, improved the appearance of the home grounds, and so efficiently planned their work that they found some time to rest, to engage in wholesome inexpensive enjoyment within the home, and to exchange neighborly hospitality.

Family planning for family welfare increased during the year. The "whole farm demonstration" to which the entire family contributed in planning and in carrying out plans for better income and for better living was an outstanding example of this wholesome trend.

Despite differences of racial backgrounds, age, and social and economic status, groups of rural homemakers throughout the United States considered basic factors affecting the home situation, determined upon major problems confronting them, and devised ways and means to solve these problems.

Nor was this all! These rural homemakers earnestly endeavored to inform themselves regarding the basic problems of American agriculture, to recognize the interdependence of rural and urban families, and to concern themselves with the larger problems of public welfare. They helped to plan the nation's agriculture through serving as members of county agricultural planning and land use planning committees to make long-time plans for conservation of soil, water and forests, and human resources.

These achievements of rural homemakers were made possible through the aid of the county and State home demonstration staffs throughout the United States.

Self-help is the basic principle of home demonstration work, so county home demonstration agents helped rural people to analyze what rural people can do for themselves. They helped rural people to develop initiative, resourcefulness, and leadership in solving their own problems as individuals and cooperatively to attain more effective living in rural areas.

### Over a Million Rural Women in Organized Groups

Home demonstration agents have helped rural women to recognize the value of organized group effort. Of the 2 million homemakers reporting improved living due to home demonstration work, 1,118,519 were members of 47,812 organized home demonstration clubs. Most of these clubs met at monthly intervals under the guidance of the county home demonstration agent.

These organizations of rural women serve many constructive purposes. They serve as clearing centers where rural women may express their common interests and problems. They give the individual homemaker opportunity to check her general thinking and her standards and practices against those of other homemakers. They provide a means of contact with rural women by educational agencies and by others interested in obtaining the viewpoint or assistance of rural women.

The home demonstration staff aided rural women to consider sound standards for their organization, and for the conduct of the business of the organization. They trained officers and committee members in their functions and helped the officers in charge to establish constructive relationships for the organization and to evaluate objectively the effectiveness of the organization and its activities.

County, State, and national organizations of rural women are recurrently invited to advise with county, State, and national members of the home demonstration staff in planning home demonstration work.

### Good Health for Rural Families

Good health is but a means toward good living but it is of basic importance. Rural women endeavored to practice healthful living, to have a courageous outlook upon life, and to develop resourcefulness in meeting difficulties. More than 301,600 homemakers reported improved health habits, and 65,042 families reported caring for accidents and illness with knowledge of what to do and how to do it as taught by home demonstration agents. A total of 67,855 persons reported having health examinations during the year; and 378,060 were immunized against typhoid; diphtheria, or smallpox; 81,282 families screened their homes; 124,302 used recommended methods of control of flies and mosquitoes; and 59,935 installed sanitary toilets. A most important contribution was made toward good health by the 133,458 families that improved their child-feeding practices, and by the 240,395 families that reported producing and preserving the food supply according to an improved yearly food supply budget. Better balanced meals

were served by 434,922 families. Cooperation between home demonstration agents and public health agencies made possible greater service to rural people in improving health conditions.

Excerpts from State reports follow:

Kansas.

Approximately 4,000 women have found valuable the recommendations relative to home nursing procedure and positive preventive measures. In addition, 5,259 women have had complete health examinations during the year. This is an increase of 50 percent over 1938. Maintaining healthful living conditions in the face of water shortage presents a problem in sanitation and a challenge to the specialist in home health and sanitation to provide the stimulus which will make water hauling less burdensome and an essential to family well-being.

New York.

The cooperative pneumonia control program which began in 1936-37 was continued. The Home Bureau continued its educational program, and the New York State Department of Health prepared outlines for lay groups.

California.

"Safety in the home" was a State-wide project. A total of 2,807 families adopted some practice for accident prevention, and 7 communities installed sickroom equipment. In all, 4,201 families adopted some practice in improving health and preventing accidents.

New Jersey.

In cooperation with the Bureau of Public Safety at Rutgers University, three home safety institutes were held, one each in north, central, and south Jersey with an average attendance of 100. This attendance represented interested homemakers of various income levels, both farm and nonfarm.

Illinois.

Health work was conducted in 1,072 communities, and 7,768 persons improved 15,420 health habits. More than 3,400 persons were immunized against typhoid, diphtheria, and smallpox.

Food for Health

Gardens and orchards, poultry and meat, and even cereals grown to meet nutritional needs of the family throughout the year, contributed to good health and toward conservation of available cash.

During 1939, 623,564 families reported canning 76,525,962 quarts of vegetables, fruit, meat, and poultry.

"Live-at-Home" has been a slogan for over 20 years in home demonstration groups in many Southern States. During 1939, throughout the Nation, "Live-at-Home," "Farm First for Food and Feed," "Better Living on the Farm from the Farm," and "Plan, Plant, Preserve, and Prosper" were slogans used to stimulate farm production for home use. Better storage of food and use of freezer lockers for home food supply were reported by all States and Puerto Rico and Alaska.

Excerpts from State reports follow:

#### Minnesota.

Homemakers have a better understanding of what good health really is and of adequate nutrition standards, and recognize health as a personal and community responsibility. There have been better planned food supplies, more families producing foods adequate to their need, more foods canned and stored, wiser food selection, more economical purchase of foods, a better understanding of food grades and labels, more satisfying and better balanced meals.

Minnesota set as a goal the establishing of hot school lunches in 25 percent of the schools in counties having home demonstration agents.

#### New Mexico.

The extension nutritionist, in cooperation with the agronomist; economist; animal husbandman; and poultry, dairy, and horticulture specialists assisted the home and agricultural agents in setting up family-food-supply demonstrations in six counties. Dry-land, irrigated, and small native farms were represented by the group.

#### Georgia.

Farm women have not only been encouraged but urged to can a sufficient quantity of food to tide them over the months when the weather is unsuited to produce gardens. Good headway has been made in 21 counties, where 7,616 families participated in special work in nutrition. In 20 counties 3,626 apple, 94,807 peach, and 1,311 pear trees were planted. In the same number of counties 22,584 grapevines and 202,499 strawberry plants were set out. Large numbers of figs, pecans, plums, quince, scuppernongs, raspberries, and youngberries were planted.

#### California.

In Napa county, a project to determine the cost of home production of food has been carried throughout the year with over 30 cooperators.

## New York.

The nutrition conference of 1939 was an outstanding achievement. It brought together nutrition experts and lay leaders from practically every agency dealing with that vital aspect of human welfare in the State of New York. This highly successful conference, like all worthwhile achievements, was not the work of a single year, nor of one group of individuals. It was the result of long years of careful work in cultivating successful relationships with other institutions and agencies; a relationship founded on mutual respect and mutual interest in solving common problems. The "good feeling," the excellent contributions to the program from every cooperating agency, the tirelessness of participants in attending sessions regularly from Monday morning through Saturday noon (In July weather) with no apparent flagging of interest, were all factors that compensated the State committee in charge of the conference far beyond their fondest hopes.

## South Dakota.

A study of three grades of canned peaches was undertaken. All present tasted and examined the fruit and came to the following conclusion: That the price is no indication of the quality, that the percentage of syrup on fruit was hard to determine by looking at it, and that most homemakers prefer a standard product rather than a choice one. The nutrition specialist prepared a demonstration on low-cost diets which made use of surplus commodities, and held a training school in every county of the State where those on relief, Farm Security borrowers, National Youth Administration workers, housekeeping aids, those disbursing surplus commodities, and others, could be present.

## Indiana.

Activities of the Home Economics Extension Department during the year on the subject of freezing included talks and demonstrations at general meetings, local and State, as well as national; sending available printed and mimeographed material to locker plant operators from time to time; conferences with prospective locker builders and operators; personal visits to locker plants; an exhibit on frozen foods at the Indiana State Fair; preparation of four mimeographed publications for general distribution; and publication of articles and radio talks.

## Alaska.

The women of the Matanuska Valley had an excellent canning exhibit at the fair. Over a thousand jars were on display. Three meetings showing the use of milk and milk products were held in the Matanuska Valley by the district agent.

## Colorado.

Food conditions were the subject of study by a committee which set up standards for foods and nutrition. The conditions found in the

survey were studied; and recommendations were prepared for cutting down bills, preventing and correcting nutritional disorders, keeping body resistance high, and providing for proper growth and development in children.

#### New Mexico.

The Santa Fe County home demonstration agent reports that there was hardly a garden in that county that did not have improved seed of the different vegetables, including chili, canning beans, corn, tomatoes, squash, spinach, and others.

#### Alabama.

Farm women in Alabama have canned 3,072,931 quarts of food. The value of food conserved was \$4,726,554. This has been supplemented by year-around gardens, home dairy, and home poultry.

Mimeographed material on a schedule for planting home gardens, fertilizers for gardens, control of garden insects, and daily diet requirements, was prepared by the home and county agents to be used in a county-wide program.

### Better Rural Housing

In many rural areas housing conditions were such as to demand attention. Rural people realize that a comfortable house means less cold in winter and less heat in summer. During the year 8,698 families built new homes according to plans furnished by extension agents. In addition, 22,505 homes were remodeled following their suggestions. The remodeling activities varied from such simple things as the addition of needed shelves or more windows to lighten the kitchen, to complete renovation of houses.

Excerpts from State reports follow:

#### Texas.

In the repair-of-the-house demonstration the minimum standards worked toward included a secure foundation, weatherproof roof, fire-proof chimneys and flues, exterior and interior walls and floors in good condition, well-fitted doors and windows, outside openings screened, porches and steps in good repair, gutters for carrying the water away, underpinning the house, an adequate supply of water piped at least into the kitchen and to a bathing space, a sanitary toilet, liberal kitchen space, at least one bedroom for every two people, a living room, and one closet per room.

The number of counties carrying this demonstration has grown from 1 in 1936 to 6 in 1939 with an enrollment of 67 demonstrators.

Water systems were an important part of this demonstration. A total of 1,850 bathrooms were equipped.

## California.

Eighty-one houses were built in 12 counties; and in 18 counties, 284 were remodeled, 391 were painted, 168 insulated, and 196 air conditioned. One hundred and five desert coolers for summer cooling were built, and 61 solar heaters were made; in 99 houses heating facilities were improved; 1,406 storage places were provided; and 2,421 lighting methods and pieces of equipment were definitely improved.

## Maine.

Maine reported a 5-year State-wide plan of low-cost home improvement. The State leader reports: "Our projects are being kept very fundamental and in most cases fit, I believe, the needs and pocketbooks of our farm people. Very outstanding is our long-time project of low-cost home improvement. This urges a 5-year plan of home improvement. It reaches the person who can spend but little each year, and encourages thoughtful consideration of a plan whereby homes may be kept in repair, and conveniences added as funds will permit. The project tends to encourage thinking ahead and development of ambition in families where there is but little money available. Then, too, by recording a desired plan of progress the Extension Service is able to assist all along the 5-year program."

## Colorado.

The group in Kit Carson County has been working on the standard farm home. They worked out a questionnaire themselves which they used in their own homes.

The women in Cheyenne County are beginning to map their county to show the location of the homes and their condition and the location of gardens, trees, and windbreaks. They also wish to map the health facilities in their county.

### Comfortable and Convenient Homes

During 1939, rural families followed suggestions of home demonstration agents to add to the comfort and convenience of rural homes. A total of 112,284 families improved the arrangement of kitchens, and 119,533 families obtained homemade or purchased labor-saving equipment for their homes. Planning for efficiency at needed housework and out-of-door tasks, arranging for a simple business center where needed records could be kept, addition of adequate storage facilities for household supplies and of wardrobes for clothing were reported by rural homemakers. A recommended schedule for household duties was followed by 58,880 women.

During the year 20,116 water systems, 5,439 heating systems, and 11,097 sewage systems were installed.

One of the outstanding factors which brought comfort to many rural homes during 1939 was the addition of electricity. During the year the Rural Electrification Administration extended electric power into 100,000 additional miles of rural territory. Private utilities extended power into approximately 20,000 miles of rural territory.\*

Improvement of lighting facilities and equipment in the home was greatly stimulated by the addition of electricity. More than 169,340 homes reported improved lighting systems.

Rural people appealed to home demonstration agents for unbiased information regarding electrical service and equipment. The agents gave rural people facts on the cost of installation, operating costs for electric current, points to consider in placing outlets, and information regarding selection and use of electrical equipment.

Excerpts from State reports follow:

#### Arkansas.

In September of this year a committee of staff members was set up to make definite recommendations as to how the Extension Service could best help farm families utilize electricity more efficiently so as to make it pay its own way, or to suggest farm enterprises which would help to pay for electric power. Recommendations of the committee included:

1. More efficient utilization of electricity.
  - a. In food production.
  - b. In food savings.
  - c. In lighting, and
  - d. In use of portable motors.
2. Farm enterprises to bring in added cash to pay for electric service.
  - a. Broilers, fryers, poultry products.
  - b. Irrigated garden large enough to produce extra truck for sale.
  - c. Preparation of a specialty for market, such as canned pecans, peach preserves, strawberry preserves.
  - d. Handicraft articles for sale.
  - e. Careful management and selection cutting of wood lot to make it pay more cash.

In Craighead County the women adopted the slogan "Household Motors - Not Household Martyrs."

#### Indiana.

With approximately 25,000 farm homes receiving electric service for the first time during 1939, there has been a heavy demand on field

---

\*Electric World

agents for information concerning selection, use, and care of electrical equipment, as well as for help on the wiring and lighting of homes. For the customers already receiving service, information has been needed as to what appliances and equipment can be justified on the basis of financial returns or family satisfaction.

#### Texas.

In 12,118 Texas rural homes the kitchen is better than it was a year ago. Of these 1,055 were new ones or were made possible by remodeling. The cash expenditure represented in this improvement is \$207,222. Sanitation and convenience have been the objectives sought in kitchen improvement. To obtain these objectives the following guides were used:

A sanitary, pleasant kitchen has adequate ventilation, sufficient natural light and sunshine, all openings screened, walls and woodwork which can be easily cleaned, nonabsorbent floors which can be easily cleaned, sanitary disposal of waste water and garbage, all equipment clean and in order, and pleasing colors.

A convenient kitchen has running water; equipment necessary for cooking, serving, and cleaning; storage for food, utensils, dishes, and cleaning equipment; provision for refrigerators; work surfaces at comfortable height for the worker; a high stool; adequate artificial light at every work center; and all equipment arranged for efficiency.

#### Cotton Mattress Making

An important factor in the comfort and health of the family is the condition of the mattresses in the home.

An important contribution to better bedding is the mattress-making activities of rural women working under the guidance of county home demonstration agents. Most of the mattresses were for family use. The average cost of each mattress was \$6; the average value, \$25. The cotton used in the making of the mattresses was contributed by the Surplus Marketing Administration, through the cooperation of the AAA.

State excerpts follow:

#### Alabama.

The mattress-making program, using Alabama-grown cotton, was carried in every county in the State and reached 58,490 women, including white and Negro club members and nonclub members. During the campaign which began August 1, 1937, 18,620 all-cotton mattresses were made, and from December 1, 1938 to November 30, 1949, 16,142 mattresses were made, a total of 34,762.

#### Arkansas.

Home demonstration agents gave their attention in 1939 largely to the organization of leader work in a mattress program rather than to

method demonstration. Their systematized work is illustrated in a report from Greene County which reads:

Directions for making mattresses are given through the 40 local leaders in the various home demonstration clubs who have been trained to give this instruction. How to spend at least one-third of life comfortably has been solved by county home demonstration clubwomen who have made 204 cotton mattresses this year and are adding to this number daily.

The home demonstration club members of Consolidated No. 1 Community have not only made mattresses for themselves, but they have taken orders and have made five mattresses for outside individuals, applying the money made thereby on the kitchen that they have recently added to their home demonstration club building. Using the cotton grown on their own farms for mattress making has been another means by which Greene County women have observed a more complete live-at-home program, Mrs. Orrell reports.

#### Making the Home Attractive

All parents know that an attractive home makes for pride in the home, strengthens the family bond, and makes young people glad to have their homes attractive at but little expenditure.

Refinishing and reupholstering furniture, refinishing of floors and walls, redyeing of old fabrics or selection of inexpensive materials of good color and design to make attractive draperies, curtains, and other accessories for living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens have added much to the attractiveness of homes. Landscape gardening from native materials brought from nearby woods or by means of exchange with other homemakers, mending of fences, and adequate screening of unsightly places, have made for attractive appearance of farm home grounds. Over 70,490 families followed suggestions in planting trees and shrubs; 70,494 families followed suggestions for walks, drives, and fences; and 102,342 families improved the exterior of the houses and outbuildings.

#### California.

Five California counties held meetings on bedroom improvement. One county had a bedroom tour. As a result of these and previous meetings, 352 bedsteads, 634 mattresses, and 1,896 pieces of bedding were bought.

#### Texas.

Bedrooms were made more healthful for sleeping; convenient for dressing; useful for reading, writing, or sewing; attractive; and restful in appearance.

## Pennsylvania.

Making use of what one has was continued this year. Men and boys in the family are showing more interest. Interest has not stopped with the family. Entire communities have been interested as is evidenced by the many grange halls that have been improved and made more convenient and attractive. (See Susquehanna County report.) These halls have attracted interest over the county and will serve as demonstrations of convenient kitchens in the different communities.

## Arkansas.

Farm families in 17 counties report the purchase of \$184,823.67 worth of equipment and supplies for home use. Additions of equipment made possible through home-industries sales included 223 refrigerators purchased, 722 stoves, 544 washing machines, 583 radios, 2,339 furniture pieces, 66 water systems installed, 40 bathrooms installed, and 3,140 small pieces of equipment.

## Maine.

A bathroom for the rural home, though it may be only a simple washroom with washstand, pitcher, and bowl, has taken bathing out of the kitchen in many homes. Miss Cobb's plan is to start as simply as necessary, with a well-equipped bathroom eventually resulting where possible. Again the plan is fundamental, simple, and far reaching.

## Georgia.

During the year 6,298 families in this district worked in a home-improvement program, using such methods of home furnishing as repairing, remodeling, and refinishing furniture; rearrangement of rooms; and treatment of walls and floors. Three thousand two hundred and sixty-seven homes were wired for electric current this year; 609 pumps were installed as well as 619 refrigerators, 143 water heaters, and 1,654 radios. Six hundred and thirty-five water systems were installed, 348 bathrooms were equipped and 115 shower baths and 611 sinks were installed, 1,263 cotton mattresses were made, 630 kitchen cabinets and 614 clothes closets were built, and 2,037 electric irons were purchased.

## Virginia.

Realizing that the available cash for the average family in Virginia is limited and that only a small portion of this is available for the clothing, great emphasis has been laid on the fact that making clothing at home is one of the best ways to save money. "Money saved is money earned." Therefore, it has been most gratifying to find the women and girls giving more attention to the construction of clothing.

During 1939 over 16,000 individuals took part in the clothing program. The total estimated savings by these members due to the clothing program was over \$50,000. This saving was due in part to construction (42,674 garments were made) and also to the effective use of

garments on hand. Twenty clinics were held for restyling garments on hand. A new method was introduced in the holding of 'one coat school of 3 days' duration at which 14 women made 5 new coats and remodeled 11 others at an estimated saving of over \$213.

### Home Grounds Improvement

#### Arkansas.

Benefits of community and home beautification cannot always be measured in dollars and cents. Increased pride in ownership or in occupancy of a home due to improved appearances usually results in increased pride in farm life as a whole and will have its effect in improving the quality of farm work on that farm which should in turn result in the production of better livestock or crops and increased financial returns. A particular value of a beautification program lies in the greater satisfaction that farm families derive from their life. With the distresses of agriculture during recent years causing many families to become discouraged with farming as a way of living, this program improves the morale of the people and has a definite value in increasing contentment with farm life.

A total of 266 communities representing 11,406 homes enrolled in the 5-year community landscaping program this year. Fifty-seven new communities started the demonstration this year. "Making the best of what one has" was the slogan.

#### California.

In San Bernardino County, meetings were held in 4 zones to visit demonstrations already under way and to start new ones. More than 50 farm homes have been decidedly improved, some of them extensively. The agent says: "Emphasis has again been put on better farm approaches, gates, driveway surfacing, better utility yards, arbors and green awnings for air conditioning the house, planting to screen unsightly areas, and the general improvement of the base planting around the house."

### Better Clothing at Low Cost

Rural women improved their appearance, extended and conserved the family income, added to family morale, and made easier the tasks of supplying needed clothing through the help given them by home demonstration agents. More than 166,480 rural families followed recommended clothing-buying practices, 294,904 homemakers were helped with clothing construction, and 274,395 with selection of clothing.

Methods of washing wool and silk garments; dry cleaning at home; home dyeing; improved methods of general household laundering; the use, care, and repair of sewing machines; and coat-making schools were other activities that increased satisfactions and reduced cash expenditures. A total of 115,607 homemakers improved children's clothing, and clothing accounts were kept by many rural families as part of wise clothing planning for the family.

Rural women estimated that the value of their clothing activities as guided by the home demonstration agents was \$2,114,791.

Savings to rural families as a result of clothing work for home demonstration club members were estimated to be more than 3 million dollars.

Another result of the clothing instruction is that farm women throughout the United States today present a well-dressed appearance and have the personal satisfaction and the poise that results from being appropriately even though inexpensively dressed. One result of the self-confidence thus developed is that rural women in large numbers are contributing to the discussion in public meetings without self-consciousness and are accepting positions of responsibility in the community and in the organizations to which they belong.

State excerpts follow:

#### Wisconsin.

The problem was how to clothe Wisconsin families as well, if not better, in 1939, yet on a smaller income than in the previous year.

This was accomplished through an increase in the number of women giving consideration to construction and care of clothing, and to better buying practices. Women made inventories of clothing on hand in order to determine the garments which needed to be made over or replaced. Construction help was given so that the garments made in the home would have a tailored or made-to-order look. Instruction was given on safe methods of dry cleaning and pressing in the home so that the family clothing could be kept clean at little expense. Aids in buying were given with the thought in mind that the most expensive article was not necessarily the best buy. The woman was encouraged to buy from the standpoint of service and whether or not the article met the needs of the individual. In this way the clothing phases added to the nonmoney income besides aiding materially in keeping up the morale of the family.

The health of the family was not overlooked. In subjects, such as buying foundation garments, shoes, hosiery and children's clothing, posture and the effect of a good fit on health were always emphasized.

#### Kansas.

Twenty-one home demonstration agents presented demonstrations on "Wardrobe Wisdom" as a contribution to the public. These twenty-one agents with the assistance of 169 women result demonstrators gave 139 public demonstrations which were attended by 6,671 women and girls.

#### California.

Sixty-eight thousand and thirty-eight pairs of shoes were reported selected according to recommendations.

The kit (exhibits of shoes and layettes) has been subject to loan since April 1938, and has been taken out by individuals. It was also exhibited by the parent-teacher council at an exposition. Seventy-five people have been benefited directly by this demonstration kit.

#### Alaska.

Glovesmaking has been a favorite activity with many women, especially those in southeastern Alaska.

#### Texas.

Much attention has been given to personal grooming, wise purchasing, and the providing of good storage space.

#### New Mexico.

Six counties with home agents carried the cotton dress project and reported excellent interest in the work on the part of the cooperators. The purpose of the project was to give rural women training not only in construction processes but in judging the quality of cotton materials and in the use of cotton, an important New Mexico product.

#### Colorado.

Farm accounts kept in four eastern Colorado counties showed clothing expenditures averaged \$41.25. The Bureau of Home Economics has given \$69 as a low cost clothing budget for father, mother, and child.

#### Maine.

The home demonstration agent in Piscataquis County reported:-  
"Everyone attending the coat schools made a coat, either for herself or one of her children. The results were very satisfactory, and every coat was a success. It will be a problem another year to keep down the enrollment. The majority of coats were made of new material, only three children's coats were made over. If the time for the school could be scheduled a week apart, this arrangement would be most satisfactory."

#### Connecticut.

In New Haven, Conn., a box of 10 wash dresses has been made available at discussions on buying dresses. Materials, construction of seams, hems, finishes of neck and sleeves, trimmings, and fastenings have been examined and compared on the various dresses. The dresses cost from 50¢ to \$1.95. One of the dresses was made at home; the others were bought.

This discussion has made many women conscious that there are other points to look for in the selection of a dress besides just the appearance; that the more expensive dress is not necessarily better made; and that the dress made at home is usually cheaper, better quality, better construction, more individual, and better fitted. Some thought it might be a

good idea for women to refuse to buy dresses that are poorly made and in that way force the manufacturers to put out a better article.

#### Summary of 113 Reports From 13 Communities

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you thoroughly examine a garment before purchasing?	106	3
Do you look for and use specifications before purchasing?	82	7
Do you report guaranteed things when not satisfactory?	68	17
Have you developed a sales resistance?	79	10
Have you learned to check "impulse buying"?	90	9
Do you avoid "bargains" unless they have a definite use?	109	1
Do you try on garments before purchasing?	102	5
Have you bought a dress since the meeting and used this information?	61	36
Has the information brought you greater satisfaction in the purchasing of dresses?	74	
Have the suggestions saved you money?	60	2
To how many friends or neighbors have you given some of this information?	152 people	

#### Managing the Family Income Brings Satisfaction

Rural families are still hopeful that parity of purchasing power will come to them. During 1939 dollars were few, and the home demonstration staff helped rural homemakers to add to and conserve the cash income and to make effective use of what they had, so as to achieve the greatest degree of satisfaction for the family.

During 1939, 44,365 families kept home accounts according to a recommended plan, and 33,602 families budgeted expenditures in relation to income. A total of 447,637 families reported that they had learned to be more effective consumers when making purchases of food, clothing, and other needed household supplies; and 57,307 families were helped by the home demonstration staff to reduce expenditures by bartering farm products or personal services for other commodities or services.

Rural women have become greatly interested in the matter of farm credit facilities. During 1939, home demonstration agents helped rural women to obtain authoritative information regarding types and sources of credit and points to consider in negotiating a loan.

The business of the farm and the business of the home are interdependent, and home demonstration agents have provided rural women with information regarding the "business side" of homemaking, including such matters as mortgages, notes, checks, wills, deeds, and the like.

Nearly 205,400 families reported that extension agents helped them to make adjustments in homemaking to gain a more satisfactory standard of living.

State excerpts follow:

## Kansas.

The value of accounts as fundamental to good money management and to the making of plans for family living, and the information on money management and farm credit are phases of home management which have been invaluable as means of helping farm people to adjust themselves to the economic situation.

## Wisconsin.

Wisconsin published a joint farm and home account book.

## Utah.

The two, 10-day consumer education schools for leaders, extension workers, and Farm Security workers called attention to earning and spending. Buying habits, patterns of living, and need for cooperation with merchants placed responsibility on all. Reports and talks as follow-up proved the value of such a school.

### Crafts and Markets Provide Cash Income

Homemade rugs, baskets, coverlets, and other home-industry products made by rural women added beauty and comfort to the home, or were sold and gave much satisfaction to the makers. The estimated value of these home furnishings was \$1,784,860, and 41,479 rural families reported developing home industries to supplement the family income.

## Georgia.

With the continued low cash income for farm families, home demonstration workers have assisted farm families in the State in developing supplementary cash for family living. This year through the miscellaneous marketing, the gross sales amounted to \$543,913. There have been 8,531 farm women and 1,452 4-H Club girls selling through miscellaneous marketing channels to supplement their family's cash income. The bankers associations in the State have cooperated in encouraging this enterprise among the farm women and girls by sponsoring special campaigns and marketing contests. As a special marketing enterprise, the Georgia Vegetable Growers Association and members of the large chain stores in the State have cooperated with the Extension Service in developing a food product for sale. This product is known as the corn-okra-tomato mixture and is a cooperative project between the food preservation and marketing specialists. This project has resulted in the sale of 8,976 cans at an average price of 14¢ per can. This project shows promise of being greatly enlarged during the coming year.

## New York.

A new service was made available to home demonstration agents this year through market information letters issued by the State Department of Agricultural Economics shortly before State-grown products were due to appear on the market in large quantities. Information was sent out regarding butter, cherries, apples, peaches, summer vegetables, and in the fall about cauliflower and squash surpluses. Home demonstration agents informed the public about these products through radio talks,

newspaper articles, and through distributing recipes giving new uses of the seasonal products. Apple and cherry pie contests were featured in some counties. In one county a delicious baked apple dessert, prepared by NYA helpers was served at the district officers' training meetings; and recipes were given to all officers present.

#### Arkansas.

Results have proved the worth of this home industry undertaking. In rural Arkansas 47,940 homes have been made more convenient, more attractive, and more homelike as a result of demonstrations given by these trained leaders in home industries. Women and girls have turned resources at hand into articles of furnishings that are both attractive and usable. The combined total of all products sold from marketing projects carried on by home demonstration clubwomen was \$1,198,399.93. Aside from the cash value and the satisfaction obtained from the use of home-industries products, the women conducting these demonstrations have derived pride from being able to do a piece of work unusually well. Home-industries work has been a contributing factor in raising standards of living.

#### Home Demonstration Markets

Excerpts from State home demonstration leader reports, 1939.

#### North Carolina.

We have in the State 44 organized home demonstration curb markets where 2,112 farm women and girls sold \$377,947.53 worth of home produce in 1939. In addition to the amount sold on the curb markets, women in 68 counties reported sales made individually to customers outside regular markets which amounted to \$371,978.49. This gives a total for organized and unorganized marketing of \$749,926.02 for the farm women in North Carolina.

In addition, 64 counties reported the sale of \$31,787.43 worth of handicraft articles which had been made at home.

#### South Carolina.

In South Carolina 31 club markets operated 12 months and 5 markets were organized and operated the last 3 months of the year. Total sales from all markets were \$141,343.83.

Home agents assist individual farm women in securing markets for surplus farm products where the farm woman does not have an opportunity to sell on a club market or to sell poultry cooperatively. The past year 29 home agents reported assisting 2,703 farm women in selling \$137,875.71 worth of products.

A total of 17,584 farm people were assisted in marketing \$543,473.59 worth of products.

## Getting Along With Others

It is widely recognized that many of the major problems of living today are due to our lack of knowledge of human nature and its needs and capacities. During 1939, 9,351 men and 138,728 women participated in the family-education group meetings held by extension agents to help adults to understand themselves and their children better and to live more happily and understandingly together. Parents learned what to expect of children and of themselves at different age levels, how to train emotions as well as muscles, and to discuss family-life problems objectively. Improved habits of children were reported by 83,044 families. In 38,288 families, parents report substituting positive methods of discipline for negative ones. An outstanding trend was the development of family councils in which all members of the family considered major family matters and made plans for the family, so that the maximum of satisfaction could be attained for each, with due consideration of the needs of all.

State excerpts follow:

### Minnesota.

The specialist gave a talk on "Understanding the Adolescent in the Family," at an open meeting in each of 4 centers. The final reports of the 194 women who attended indicated that the talk helped them to understand:

1. What parents might do to help the adolescent.
2. The needs of the adolescent.
3. That all parents have about the same problems.

### Colorado.

The instruction given on "Heredity and Environment," "Constructive Discipline," and "The Adolescent's Companions" replaced many old-fashioned ideas with the more up-to-date method of looking at such problems. Parents have become conscious of the vast amount of material which has been published to aid them in the big job of rearing their children satisfactorily.

### New York.

Specialists continued to cooperate with other agencies and extension departments for close working relationships in promoting a unified program. Joint subprojects with other extension specialists have been fostered, especially in family recreation, living-room arrangement, family hospitality, fatigue studies, child nutrition clinics, and family health.

In two counties, the family-life specialist cooperated with the home management department leader of the fatigue-study clubs on the subject, Emotional Control in Relation to Fatigue.

## Illinois.

Two counties have sponsored study groups, emphasizing phases of adolescent development. Observations were made of adolescents in the community by group members, in an effort to have an objective basis for study and discussion of their interests, needs, and the actual situations existing in the particular communities. The phases of adolescent development in which the participants were most interested concerned social development and recreational opportunities for adolescents.

### Home-made Good Times for Rural People

Good times contribute to health of mind and body. They help people to withstand bad times. Rural people, like city people, desire to conduct needed tasks efficiently and to have time and facilities for some of the recreational satisfactions of life.

During 1939, home demonstration agents helped rural homemakers to plan wholesome, inexpensive good times for the family and for the community. Among the activities reported by rural families were individual hobbies; family fun night; county and community picnics; community nights for all ages; and tours to places of special interest, such as historical spots, flower shows, museums, art galleries, and factories. Rural women's choruses, rural orchestras, and dramatic presentations by rural people were other phases of recreational activities which were developed under the guidance of home demonstration agents and to which the agents gave assistance.

In 18,821 communities a recreation program was developed. Over 178,300 families followed suggestions for home recreation, and 10,131 community or county-wide plays or pageants were presented.

Those informal good times have done much to help maintain the morale of rural people at a time when farm income is still at great disadvantage as compared with the income of other groups in the national economy.

State excerpts follow:

#### Arkansas.

Regardless of the satisfaction to be obtained from living at home, improving housing facilities, raising the farm income, and other fundamentals relating to the securing of food, shelter, and clothing, the average farm family life is not complete without the opportunity for self-expression that is provided through drama, music, games, and other forms of community recreation.

In 59 counties 72 communities followed the "neighborhood night" plan of regular entertainment for young and old.

## Recreation

### Kansas.

Each group includes some recreation in its monthly programs. Book reviews are becoming popular and are given by leaders trained to do this. In addition, community recreation has been encouraged with the result that 22 choruses have been organized and 168 one-act plays have been given. As a climax, our Farm and Home Week program includes two nights of home-talent dramatics and music presented by county groups which have shown outstanding achievement as judged at district and home-talent festivals.

### Iowa.

Because of 71 choruses, with an enrollment of 1,739 women, it seemed wise to set up a State chorus committee to serve with the State Extension staff to formulate plans and policies for the coming year. The committee was appointed by the various choruses at each of the district chorus tournaments, one woman from each of the Farm Bureau districts of the State. The first meeting was held at the time of the State fair.

### Pennsylvania.

Nineteen counties report having held either a music contest, dramatics, or rural talent festival.

Six, 3-day women's camps representing 17 counties were held during the year. One camp attended by women from 4 counties, was a new venture, and 1 other county participated in a camp for the first time.

Every camp had a well-planned program including educational talks and discussions, nature study, handicraft, recreation, campfires and vespers, as well as free periods when campers did just as they chose.

### Indiana.

That the rural women of Indiana are interested in music and singing was definitely indicated when 1,500 women, representing 70 counties, participated in the music festival held during the Farm and Home Week, January 11, 1939. Another music festival will be held during the Farm and Home Week in January 1940, with every indication that there will be 2,000 women in the group.

### Ohio.

The State leaders met with groups of home demonstration agents by districts and sometimes with committees of women from the counties participating to consider values in camps, development of programs to meet needs and interests, management of the camp, finances, and other items. Eleven such conferences were held. These serve as training conferences for agents as well as for committee members. In addition to such conferences or committee meetings for development of plans, a representative of the State office attends camps in which more than one county participates

and usually serves as program director. This is done with beginning camps and serves as a training process for agents who later function as camp directors in place of the representative from the State office. Seventeen camps were held in 1939 with a total attendance of 917. Sixty counties were represented in the camps.

### Nearly 237,000 Rural Women Are Volunteer Leaders

Leadership among farm women continues to increase in quantity, and in quality of service rendered. During 1939, 236,535 women gave volunteer service as officers or subject-matter leaders or as leaders for special events. These leaders were trained by members of the home demonstration staff in their respective duties. More than 65,000 other women and 25,498 older girls served as leaders of 4-H Clubs.

Each year the home demonstration staff provides more effective training for these leaders. This is reflected in their greater willingness to carry out the obligations of leadership, in their greater sense of security in carrying out their assigned duties, in the effectiveness of the resulting leadership activities, and in their satisfaction as leaders.

Rural women report that the opportunities afforded for broader contacts and for training by members of the home demonstration staff are of such value that the time donated is well spent.

Today rural women are serving effectively on community, county, State, national and international committees which are concerned with matters of broad economic and social significance.

The widespread participation of rural women in home demonstration work, and the volume of volunteer leadership given by rural women in furthering home demonstration work is evidence that home demonstration work is meeting fundamental needs of rural families and that its methods are basically sound in dealing with adults.

### Special Events

Each year in every State rural women are helped by home demonstration agents to plan for special events which enrich their knowledge and experience.

Attendance at county achievement days, farm women's camps, State short courses, farm and home weeks, and at district and State meetings of organizations of rural women and of State and national organizations whose programs affect the rural home, are events in which rural women participate. Often they plan or contribute to the planning of such events, and often they are speakers on these programs.

Outstanding among these special events on a Nation-wide scale during 1939 were the following: A Rural-Urban Conference was arranged by the Secretary of Agriculture and held in Washington, D. C., March 13-15. To this meeting the Secretary invited 50 women representing all major

activities of women in the United States. Twenty-five of these women came from farm homes; the other 25 represented urban activities of women. The group came from all sections of the United States. They discussed the matter of abundant living, asking and answering such questions as what is abundant living? do we have it in the United States? if not, why not? The conference ended with a consideration of what those in attendance might do as a desirable following up of their discussions which brought rural and urban women into such wholesome understanding of each other's problems. Similar meetings were held in some of the States during the remainder of 1939, and other States have plans for State-wide or county-wide meetings of similar pattern during 1940.

Five rural homemakers, members of the National Home Demonstration Council, were asked to represent rural home interests at the conference on Education for Citizenship in Democracy, which was sponsored by Columbia University in August 1939.

May 23, 1939 was Rural Women's Day at the New York World's Fair. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the guest speaker and 2,500 people including homemakers from over 30 States attended the meeting. Five rural women participated in the general program, and five others contributed to a Nation-wide special radio broadcast.

Approximately 300 delegates from the United States attended the London Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World. A majority of the delegates were farm women. They prepared an exhibit typifying the handicraft of rural women of the United States, they were the speakers on the program, and they participated in the group discussions at the conference. There was no discussion of peace or war, but the friendly understanding and good will that have developed through the international contacts bid fair to offer an important factor in promoting international cooperation when the war clouds again pass away.

#### Urban Homemakers Carry On

Just as county home demonstration agents serve rural homemakers, so in six cities of the United States there are urban home demonstration agents and assistant agents who aid urban homemakers. These agents are supervised and assisted by the State home demonstration leader and her assistants.

Urban home demonstration agents carry on their work in somewhat the same way that rural agents do, but the programs differ in emphasis. Quite naturally the urban programs give greater attention to consumer education although the basic principles are alike in matters of feeding, housing, and clothing the family; use of time and income; and of developing wholesome family life.

The urban home demonstration agents cooperate with the many agencies that serve urban families in matters related to family life and community services related thereto.

## Work With Negro Families

A staff of 221 Negro county home demonstration agents and 12 Negro home demonstration supervisors aided rural Negro families in 15 States to improve their living conditions.

These families were helped to grow food supplies needed for good health; to can, cure, or store sufficient supplies for nonproductive months; to make the house sanitary and comfortable; and to provide nourishing and well-served meals.

Structural repairs, as of roofs and chimneys, for houses and farm buildings added much to the comfort of Negro families.

Health practices were taught, as was simple home care of the sick and care in accidents. Dairying, poultry work, home butchering, and the making of syrup were also a part of the Negro homemaking program. Planting of home grounds greatly improved the appearance of their surroundings.

Home sewing instruction helped Negro families greatly, the clothing work being valued at \$151,854. Mattress making was an outstanding feature of the 1939 work. Rugs, quilts, and spreads were also made by Negro home-makers under the guidance of the home demonstration agents.

The Negro agents also rendered service to various agencies such as AAA, SCS, FSA, TVA, WPA, and NIA, in order that rural Negro families might share in the benefits of the programs of these agencies.

## Summary

The aims and achievements of the Federal, State, and county home demonstration staffs are epitomized in the following excerpts from State and county members of the home demonstration staff. Home demonstration work is a challenging task. Its rewards are deeply satisfying to all who participate in it.

The fundamental aim of home economics extension work was the development of rural family life in attaining a higher plane of profit, comfort, culture, and influence, through a continued program of education. In the attainment of this goal, the following are some of the needs as expressed by rural people:

1. To develop desirable standards for home and community living.
2. To maintain and manage an income, both money and non-money, which will contribute to better living.
3. To discover, develop, and utilize leadership among rural women and girls.
4. To utilize the results of scientific research in relation to rural home and family life.

5. To promote and maintain health.
6. To discover and utilize the opportunities and satisfactions which may be derived from rural family life.

Improved practices, improved skills, and changed attitudes and viewpoints can well be considered as units of measurement. Program planning meetings and discussion groups have undoubtedly created a greater desire among those in home economics work to assist in solving farm family problems.

Lella Gaddis,  
State home demonstration leader,  
Indiana.

A few of the more outstanding instances of substantial contributions of county extension agents to the welfare of the rural people of the State as a whole might be listed as follows:

1. Development of a spirit of service among farm women.
2. Finding and development of hidden talents and of leadership ability.
3. Recognition of the value and use of concerted action in analyzing and solving the problems of farm homes and communities.
4. Development of the desire for continuing education for farm people and the giving of the opportunity to satisfy this desire.
5. Assistance toward security through the teaching of good home management based upon economic and social factors affecting agriculture.
6. Development of an appreciation of rural life and of a more creative attitude on the part of farm women toward their job of homemaking.
7. Enlargement of the scope of awareness of farm women.
8. Achievement in countless numbers of farm homes and communities of higher standards of living.
9. Family cooperation.

Mrs. Sarah Porter Ellis,  
State home demonstration leader,  
Iowa.

The Barnes County, N. Dak., home demonstration agent reported: One of the finest compliments to home demonstration work came to this office from one of the farm managers of an insurance company. The manager asked the agent to stop at one of the company's farms to see what had been

done to the house. He went on to state that he had persuaded his company to spend some money on its houses to make them more convenient and attractive. He said this money had brought the best return of any of the company's investments. The whole family was different. They took more interest in their work and were much more contented and satisfied. He then added: "The work being done by the home demonstration staff with rural women gave us the idea, and we appreciate it."

The home demonstration agent of York County, S. C., reported: Community sings were held in practically every community. At these meetings the whole community - men, women, and children, - gathered together in a member's home, at the schoolhouse, or at the church and there enjoyed a regular old-fashioned singing.

In all of the communities socials of some kind were held. These were in the form of picnics, oyster suppers, community parties, and community plays. At these meetings, as at the community sings, everybody took part.

The outlook for home demonstration work in the county is as bright and promising as it could be. The one big handicap is the fact that more work is planned and requested than can possibly be handled by one person. More than ever during the coming year much of the club work and community work will have to be handled by local leaders.

York County is an excellent place in which to work, and it is a joy to work with the people and to see the eager response with which all extension efforts are met. It is a pity that although certain sections of the county are begging for work, it is absolutely impossible to reach them because one worker cannot do all the work in the time there is to do it.





# Better Living Through Self-Help

A Summary of Home Demonstration Work in the  
United States, 1939

Grace E. Frysinger



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EXTENSION SERVICE

M. L. WILSON, *Director*

REUBEN BRIGHAM, *Assistant Director*

WASHINGTON, D. C.